

New Directions Update (Feb. 24, 2014)

- (1) **AL State Dept. of Education** – from Linda Felton-Smith, Learning Supports Director:
"I am glad I was able to share Alabama's work at AASA. Superintendents from two of the pilot districts attended with me and shared their views about the work. They were very positive. We had effective interaction and questions. All Districts are calling already to be included in the next group. Thanks for all that you do to help with learning supports."

You can see the presentation Linda Felton-Smith made at the national AASA conference online at <http://resources.aasa.org/ConferenceDaily/CDO-presentations/2014/Feb14-1400-Implementation-Comprehensive-System.pdf>

For more on the work in the Alabama Districts, as we acquire information, we are adding it to the section on our website entitled: *Where's It Happening -- Trailblazing and Pioneering Initiatives* (click on this in the left col. of our website or for more direct access to go to <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/trailblazing.htm>). Included there, you will find initial information from Shelby County Schools, Chickasaw City Schools, Etowah County Schools, and Lauderdale County Schools.

- (2) **From Phoenix Union HS District** – from the district learning supports training leader:

"We are preparing for our next Professional Learning Community session on learning supports. It would be helpful if we could contact you to discuss some of our ideas around resource mapping."

Following our phone call, we sent them a link to the LaCrosse WI resource mapping video (see http://youtu.be/-QmhekE7_k).

They responded:

"Thank you. After viewing this, I think this could be shown to our leadership and Board to help them to get the bigger picture. I will forward to the Assistant Superintendent for her use with Leadership."

- (3) **Gainesville City schools** receives national recognition -- news release from AASA – <http://www.accessnorthga.com/detail.php?n=271209>

Excerpt:

Gainesville City Schools (GA) Supt. Merrienne Dyer was presented with the American Association of School Administrators "Learning Supports for Students Leadership Award" It was presented at the national conference on Education and is given to a school leader and district who has done the following:

- 1- Implemented a framework with school and community collaboration that supports students and results in improved achievement and graduation rates
- 2- Collaborates regularly with districts around the country to promote the work in unifying learning supports systems

Gainesville City Schools has been involved in a collaborative through AASA, with support from Scholastic, Inc, for five years. The initiative has applied the theory and research of UCLA professors Dr. Linda Taylor and Dr. Howard Adelman as a leadership framework. The collaborative now includes the State of Alabama and twenty districts across the country. .."

(4) Bloomington, MN -- from the Learning Supports Coordinator in:

The district's immediate focus is on two workgroups. One dealing with a full continuum of mental health support and the other addressing hunger issues. In terms of implementation, they report:

"We have decided to first address the Tier 3 hunger issues - are beginning backpack programs located in the schools We are partnering with a local, long-standing community organization, VEAP (volunteers enlisted to assist people) to put together the backpacks and deliver them to the schools as this is what they do. Additionally VEAP is working with us to promote (through flyers placed in the backpacks) families using the foodshelf and also education about nutrition, cooking classes etc. After we ensure tier 3 needs are being met for all in need at our schools we are focusing our efforts on broadening Tier 1 (ALL schools providing free breakfast for all students - almost there already) and a more comprehensive education plan around nutrition and ensuring more nutritious offerings in our lunch programming - this will take a bit, but we have passionate people who want to make it happen. For Tier 2: We have kids on free and reduced lunch who are not allowed more than one entree even those paying can have more than one. Food sometimes gets thrown out rather than given to kids on free and reduced lunch. We are also working on better ways to identify families in need - so far we are using staff report - If you know of better, more comprehensive ways to identify kids, let me know. You may have also heard some of the MN talk about the commissioner of education calling out all school districts who don't allow kids to eat if they have deficient lunch accounts New Link - this has led to some immediate changes in practices for lots of MN school districts. "

(5) About justifying funding for learning supports

The following is a type of request we regularly receive and so we are sharing our response in case it is of use to any of you:

Request: "We're looking to find research that will allow us to justify using the District's federal and state funds to build a comprehensive system of student learning supports. We need data that shows that this approach makes a statistically significant positive change in student achievement. It will also be beneficial to that this approach makes positive change in improving: Behavior, Attendance, and School Connectedness. Any research you can point us to would be welcome."

Center Response: "Because it is a bit more complicated than folks tend to appreciate, we have prepared responses over the years and included them as part of Q & A Talking Points included in the *Center's System Change Toolkit for Transforming Student Supports into a Unified & Comprehensive System for Addressing Barriers to Learning and Teaching*. The most recent responses can be found in the following documents:

>What's the Research base for Moving Toward a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports? – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/WhatstheEvidenceBase.pdf>

>Data Related to Gainesville (GA) City Schools' Work on Developing a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/edcsum.pdf>

>Data Related to Iowa's Work on Developing a Comprehensive System of Learning Supports – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/iaaireval.pdf>

You may also want to indicate that others across the country are already working on this see *Where's it Happening Trailblazing and Pioneering Initiatives* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/summit2002/trailblazing.htm>

Hope this helps. As you proceed, let us know if you think we can be helpful. And please share your progress with us so we can share it with others."

LET US HEAR FROM YOU ABOUT YOUR NEW DIRECTIONS EFFORTS!